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BY
NETTIE I. FREESE

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KNAPP, PECK & THOMSON
1908
AUBURN, N. Y.

Up North

Now it sometimes strangely happens,
  On the balmy northern shore
Of that ice-bound land of snowdrifts
  Known to Fame as Labrador,
That when hearts do stir in bosoms
  And the lover seeks his mate,
That ungracious clod, her father,
  Doth nowise reciprocate.

But fond hearts have laughed at fathers
  Through these many, many years ;
So the love-lorn swain I'm singing
  Scraped away his frozen tears,
And as soon's the moon was hidden
  In the silent western sky
He sought out his loved one's dwelling
  And did creep in soft and sly.

Here it may be told in passing
  That in 'foresaid Labrador
If a man but steals his dear one
  She is his for evermore,—
Which doth spare her much expenses
  For the happy tie that binds,
And doth save her gentle neighbors
  From a-peeping through the blinds.

She was lying sweetly sleeping,
Rolled so thick in furry skin
That she looked like what Dame Nature
Wraps a caterpillar in ;
And of graceful bundles like her
There were others, three or four ;
But the instinct of the lover
Knows his own the wide world o'er.

So he deftly gagged and bound her,
The sweet being of his choice,
Lest she coyly rend the night-time
With her muscles and her voice.
Then he lovingly reflected
That a maid who's gagged and bound
And doth make no fuss about it
Is a treasure all around.

And he might have stood reflecting
For some sev'ral moments more,
With his feet quite absent-minded
Thawing dimples in the floor,
But he thought him of her father,—
How the fearful creature might,
Like the famous gourd of Jonah,
Go and spring up in the night.

He that fears and does not falter
  Writes his name on Bravery's scroll;
And this Labradorian lover,
  With fear tugging at his soul,
Yet unflinching bent above her
  And like Ellen's Lochinvar
He did clasp her to his bosom,—
  Sweetly near, and yet so far;

Though when he had wriggled with her
  Through the hole that let him in
He did ooze cold perspiration
  Thinking of what might have been,
And as he arranged the sledge-robes
  There were chances nine to three
That he'd vote at next election
  Solid 'gainst polygamy.

But his faithful reindeer traveled
  As it ne'er before did go,
Safely bringing him ere morning
  To his cheery hut of snow,
Where in grateful recognition
  He caressed its steaming side
And did banquet it quite sumptuous
  On a scrap of walrus-hide.

Then he turned his fond attention
To the figure in the sled,
And did pick up in his strong arms
The sweet maid who'd turned his head;
And the while he carried her in-doors,
His own lovely sugar plum,
His each raptured heart-beat told him
The Millennium had come.

Next he lit his whale-oil lantern,
Though its odor made him cough
And the flame so very cold was
That it kept a-breaking off;
And he reached down 'mong her tongue-roots
And with much grace drew from thence
The restraining bunch of seal-skin
That had barred her eloquence.

Then he softly turned her hood back
To gaze down into her eyes
And discover what he'll feel like
When he wakes in Paradise;
But some things in Fate's dark pocket
It would seem would drive us mad,
And his first fond, fond look showed him
That he'd run off with her dad.

Reflections on the Foregoing

What, forsooth, should we be knowing
Of our loved land of the free
If Columbus's scribe had left him
Out upon the moist green sea?
So we wonder, as we listen
To the part that's left untold,
What the disappointed swain did
When his blood ceased running cold.

Did he spurn the hapless parent
And neglect him, lying bound,
Till the thirsty reindeer ate him
Or he froze fast to the ground?
Or did he at next dead midnight
Silent drop him at his door
And snatch up the gentle maiden
That he'd meant to snatch before?

Or, as 'twixt the grim old father
And the charming little witch,
Did he learn from his cold reason
That it made no difference which?—
But it's quite extremely likely
That his grateful eyes grew dim
Thinking of the worseness of it
If her dad had kidnaped him.

Referring to Adam and the Patriarchs

When our first parent, Adam, was so grossly impolite
He ate up Eve's whole apple when she offered him a bite,
Or did beg God to exempt him
On the ground that Eve did tempt him,
He did bring upon his mem'ry the reproof of ev'ry class,
For each son of man since Adam has known how to treat a lass.

When Noah went a-sailing without any sort of sail
And Jonah went a-whaling on the wrong side of the whale
It would hardly be surprising
If they barely missed capsizing
Or that Noah saw his ark 'light where no current e'er had been
And poor Jonah had a feeling as if he'd been taken in.

When Moses's mother hid him in a basket in the Nile
'Twas good the thing that found him was no prowling crocodile;
For it surely would have followed
That if Moses had been swallowed
He could not have led his people out of Egypt's awful thrall
To supply us clothes that fit us "like the paper on the vall."

When Samson slew much Philistines, that they might not slay him first,
He gave them the impression that this life is short at worst;
And ere now he has an inkling,
Up beyond the stars a-twinkling,
That, inspired by his example, it at length hath come to pass
That we do ourselves wield nimbly the proud jawbone of an ass.

When Jacob served for Rachel, and got Leah in her place,
It left the best girl single, as is frequently the case;
And no doubt he told her father,
Who had caused him all that bother,
'Twas as if he'd ordered oysters and the waiter brought him smelts,
And if it should happen often he would deal with someone else.

They dyed poor Joseph's garment with the blood of some slain thing,
And G'liath died himself by the stone from David's sling.
There is little that's undying
But the heat where we'll be frying.
We have dyed when we were bald and we have bawled when others died,
And it's likely we shall always, while we wear our scalps outside.

The good old prophet Daniel did live in the lions' den,
And symp'thized ever after with the many married men.
There were patriarchs in plenty,
We could name nineteen or twenty,
And they ne'er could hear pork mentioned but they felt a dreadful qua'm,
Though through all the generations they have rev'renced Abra*ham*.

A Picture and a Prayer

Where the pumpkin lies resplendent
'Mong the brown shocks of the corn,
And the red leaves of the maple
Laugh the lesser leaves to scorn;

Where the happy brooklet, singing,
Flaunts its jewels to the sun,
Dancing, laughing, boasting ever
Of the glory it has won;

Where belated birds are winging,
Weird against the autumn sky,
And the field-mouse stocks its burrow,
Knowing not the reason why,

There a little lad and lassie,
Brown and supple-limbed and strong,—
Just another bar of music
In sweet Nature's triumph-song,—

Walked and noted all the beauty
Of the toadstools and the moss,
Laughed to hear the squirrel's chiding:
How dared they his lawn to cross?

And to be so big and dreadful
That they set his heart a-chill?
And make noises, when the woodland
Was but now so soft and still?

Looked across to where the willows
Made the pools seem deep and dark;
Paused to watch the brown grasshoppers
On the gray stump's sun-warmed bark;

Gathered nuts beneath the beech-tree,
Reached and climbed for bittersweet,
And still rambled on, unheedful
Of the lagging of their feet,—

Trudging home behind the cattle
When the happy day was done,
Toward the splendid gold and crimson
Of the setting of the sun.

Darling little lad and lassie,
Nature's sweetest, dearest part!
Thou, O gracious God of Autumn,
Keep the beauty in their heart.

Mr. Brown's Dog

Mr. Brown came up the back walk at dinner-time leading a big yellow dog. He had no use for the creature, and besides, he was afraid of it, for the red flag of anarchy waved in its eye; but he had possessed himself of it, and now he had a painful duty to perform,—to show it to his wife and tell her "because why."

She was not a fear-inspiring woman, this sharer of his joys, but sometimes a man's proceedings do not appeal to his wife's common sense and she makes remarks; and if in addition to her common sense her sense of justice must needs be placated he may well stop and consider. So Mr. Brown paused on the walk, and presently he reached the foregone conclusion that if she got mad he would, and if she didn't he might; it would all depend on her.

However, he resolved that whatever the end might be he would begin tactfully and like a Christian; so he led the dog up to the back stoop and said to Mrs. Brown as she came to the door: "Ain't he a dandy? and he's clear gain! I took him for a debt."

"What debt?" she asked, with sudden suspicion.

"The five dollars that Jenkins owed you for embroidering his wife's dress," he answered.

This fig tree might have borne thistles but that Mrs. Brown caught sight of something that needed immediate attention. Her husband, like the poor, she had always with her.

She came out, appearing to be mentally disturbed, and rushed down the steps shouting, "See that dog rolling in my geranium-bed! He'll break down every one of the plants!"

"They'll straighten up again after a rain," said Mr. Brown hastily. "What he's doing is destroying the bugs. That dog has a great head."

"Well, he won't have it long!" cried Mrs. Brown, and she jerked the rope in a way that made her statement seem probable; and the dog came out.

"Let's tie him to the pear tree and eat dinner," said Mr. Brown smoothly; "I'm hungry." And he added as he surveyed him, tied, "He's a regular lapdog. He'll be lots of company for you these long days."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brown to herself, "I'm pining for a lapdog that weighs more than I do."

They went in to dinner, and presently Mr. Brown betook himself out and inspired the dog to cease pawing up the choice young grapevine.

Then, as an ounce of prevention, he brought the beast up to tie him to a post of the stoop. Just at that moment the kitten came frisking by, and the dog, thinking to roll her as a sweet morsel under his tongue, frisked after her; but with rare tact and delicacy she scrambled up Mr. Brown's thin summer trousers and coat and stood based (basted, it felt like) on his bald head,—looking somewhat like an unfinished halo.

Mrs. Brown came out in loyal haste with the stove-shaker to throw at the cat, but Mr. Brown shouted at her to wait till he stood from under,—and he mentioned to her that she must be a blasted idiot.

Then he wooed the cat off, very much as he would a bumblebee, and soon she was sitting on the wood-pile washing her hands of the whole disagreeable affair.

But Mrs. Brown's hands were not yet washed of it. No woman is so great an idiot that she likes to be called one,—even a blasted one.

Hence Mrs. Brown was ruffled, and as her husband stood gingerly feeling of his scalp and hoping there was enough of it left for a nest-egg, she said in a tone that he knew was coming, "Now, I'd

like to know why you got that good-for-nothing dog, and what you are going to do with him."

"Well," he thundered, "I made up my mind the other night when I was hunting from Maine to Floridy for my undershirt that I'd try and get something that you couldn't lend. 'Good-for-nothing'! He's good for seventeen times as much as that confounded cat studded with fishhooks! That cat's enough to break up a family, and if *he* doesn't chew her into ribbons I will! That's a very choice kind of a dog, woman, and he'd sell for a big price if anybody wanted him. But I'm not going to sell him," he concluded grandiloquently; "he's here to stay,—hey, Juno?"

"'Juno'?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown; "What do you call him Juno for?"

"Because it's his name! Do you think I call him Juno because it's the place where his uncle got choked on a bone?"

"I suppose," he continued after a pause, "there's something around that you could rub on my head?—some mustard poultice or iodine or something?"

"There's 'Vacuum Oil,'" she answered grimly.

Then they went in to finish their repast, and the dog pounced upon a neighbor's straying chicken, and rent the air with squawks and barks and flying feathers. Mr. Brown rushed out to the rescue, and Mrs. Brown lent her aid by hurling at the belligerents her partially gnawed ear of corn, striking Mr. Brown on the side of his persecuted head.

He restored the fowl to its coveted liberty and shortened the dog's rope.

"There's your corn," he announced coldly as he went in, tossing the half-eaten ear upon Mrs. Brown's plate, with two chicken-feathers and some grass and a plum-pit adhering to it. "A body'd think to see you perform that it was my fault the dog is here, or that it was I who was munching the squawking hen."

"I'm sorry, Henry," she said humbly. "Which side did it strike you on?"

"On the side that was toward you," he replied savagely. "I don't suppose that with even your style of throwing you could have hit me on the other side."

After another brief season of satisfying his inner man Mr. Brown went out to restrain the dog from gnawing the stoop post, and brought him into the house.

He lay down on the floor with his head on his fore paws (the dog did) and fixed his savage eyes on Mrs. Brown, and growled menacingly when she moved.

At length, when she had exhausted what charity she had that suffereth long and is polite, she said, "Henry, I'm in mortal fear of that blood-thirsty yellow elephant, and I won't *have* him here."

"Well, Mary," Mr. Brown replied with unexpected mildness, "you'll probably have to suffer some little annoyance of that sort from him till he gets used to his new surroundings; but when he once does, you wouldn't trade him for a farm in New Guinea. There won't a neighbor dare come within gun-shot of the house; nor the grocery-man, nor the mail-carrier, nor—and he's so playful and gentle and kind," Mr. Brown prudently branched off. "You can see for yourself, Mary, what an affectionate glimmer there is in his eyes,—and look at those teeth when he growls at you! Aren't they splendid? Why he could bite clear through you and three men couldn't pull him off. And his bark is blood-curdling! And such endurance! I think," he continued after reflecting, "we'll keep him out in the stall. Come on, Juno!"

"You'll have to give him something to eat, of course," said Mrs. Brown, with an expression of tone which indicated that she thought Mr. Brown ought to have known *that* little without being told.

"Something to eat!" he shouted. "What do you propose to feed him? Why, woman, that dog'll eat as much as you would, or an ox!"

"Well, he's got to have something," replied Mrs. Brown. "I can't have an animal of that size starving on my conscience. And besides, there isn't room enough for him in that stall; he'll stagnate."

"Stagnate! Look at an anaconda!" he exclaimed, thrusting out his arm so unexpectedly that she cast a horrified look in the direction of his gesture. "Look at an anaconda! A museum-man will go out into the—desert and catch one a good deal bigger than that dog is, and keep it for years in a herring-box. And as to feeding it, he gives it a decent-sized horse to eat once in three or four months. And does the thing suffer for lack of food and exercise? Not at all! A good, healthy anaconda could knock *you* out in one round. I'm not sure but it could make it uncomfortable for me, even."

Then the dog settled the food question for the time by seizing the roast of meat from the table and wafting himself and it out through the window-screen.

He lay in the bed of pansies and ate his prize, and then Mr. Brown took possession of him and shut him up in the barn.

In the wee, sma' hours, when his "bark," coupled with his "endurance," was making night hideous, his owner remarked savagely: "If that brute behaves for the next few days as he has so far, I'll take him back to Jenkins tomorrow morning! He can pay the five dollars for that confounded embroidery in cash."

"I wouldn't mention it to him, if I were you," said Mrs. Brown. "He and his wife came and paid it last week. He only wanted to get rid of the dog."

Then silence reigned in the sleeping-room—and out over the flood of it floated the dog's staunch bark.

The Crocodile

A Tale of Distress and Disappointment For the Young

Once upon a time, on a rocky pile
There did sit a fat old crocodile
A-looking 'round on the things that grew
And wishing much he'd a lunch or two ;
But the one thing handy was just a clam,
And its shell might puncture his diaphragm.

So he scrambled into a tall, green tree
To devour some peanuts ; and then he
Observed he'd made quite a sad mistake,
That threatened him with a stomach-ache ;
For a tree-toad said he had always found
That the nice fresh peanuts are under ground.

Then he clambered up far above the tree
And with patience watched to see if he
Could catch his claw in the silky fur
Of a fine, fat, juicy Skye terrier ;
But an old owl told him he'd known from birth
That Skye terriers live on the soft green earth.

Then he smiled and said that he begged to say
He had never liked them anyway,
And flutt'ring down to a mossy bog
He dug down deep for a fat ground-hog ;
But a fish-worm said, with a cheerful flop,
That he'd find ground hog in a sausage-shop.

Then the croc'dile muttered with much disgust
That the English language is the *wust !*
And ate a pig with a yellow spot
That went to swim when its ma said not,
And he told the good little girls and boys
That he chewed very quiet : the food made the noise.

Woman's Way

A man loved a maiden, as sometimes occurs,
And he gracefully asked her if he might be hers.
She told him she'd take him to have and to hold
Till the sun pours forth darkness and blue flame is cold.
But one day she wondered, and the wondering grew,
If he snored like her pa and some others she knew.

She vowed if he did, even much less than those,
She'd return him his ring and their romance should close,
And he could go on, with his heart like a stone,
Sadly trav'ling the rest of Life's pathway alone;—
Though she'd a suspicion a merciless fate
Would prevent her from knowing till it was too late.

He called that same evening,—so weary with toil
And Life's haps and its scraps and its noise and turmoil
That, spite of his efforts, he fell asleep soon
With his head on the table, his ear in a spoon,
And straightway he snored, without any prelude,
Till she thought of a menag'rie imploring for food.

And when she'd discovered his nose could give birth
To about ev'ry vocal contortion on earth
She said to herself,—and so any one might,—
She'd be blamed if she'd listen to *that* ev'ry night!
And then he evolved such a horrible snore
That his sleep-angel, frightened, fled out of the door.

He forthwith awoke, and it seemed he might weep,—
And he told her with pain that his ear was asleep.
She flew to his side, and with velvety pa'm
She caressed it and soothed it as the sea does a clam,
And told him she'd love him forever and more;
But no doubt she was grateful his ear did not snore.

Balloons

October 17, 1908.—The German balloon Plauen was picked up Wednesday night in the North Sea. Clinging to it were the two aëronauts.—*Press Dispatch.*

Balloons were invented for purposes of aërial navigation, biding the time when we become angels.

With the spreading of their fame Mother Goose's fashion of riding through the air on a gander fell into disfavor,—chiefly because ganders cannot fly high: their sex keeps them down. Furthermore, a gander when flying at a rapid rate is likely to stumble and spill his rider out.

The advice, "Go up, thou bald head," which the children gave to Elisha, seems to indicate that there were balloons in Bible days; and the fact that the famished bears presently ate the children suggests that the latter were the inventors, for inventors are wont to die of hunger. But the first balloon of modern times was made in 1783, in France, by two brothers, Stephen and Joseph Montgolfier.

The Montgolfier balloons were filled with air heated by a fire built beneath them, and aëronauts were obliged to supply themselves with fuel for a reheating when the balloon began to descend; but soon hydrogen gas instead came into use as a means of inflation, several pounds of the latter weighing only as much as one pound of air.

While those first balloons must necessarily have been crude as compared with ours, they furnished the voyager one means of death that in ours is hopelessly lacking.

In 1785 two men traveling in a hydrogen balloon and determined at all hazards to be safe, carried suspended from it a small montgolfière with its fuel, and at the proper time—if there be a proper time for folly—built a fire. As they rose into thinner air

the gas expanded, and forcing its way down through the neck of the balloon came in contact with the fire and ignited. The balloons burned and the men hastened out.

Whatever slight disagreement aëronauts in these harrowing circumstances may have as to which planet they shall start for, they finally hit upon the earth. There is no place like home.

These two men hoped to reach their goal in safety by climbing down along each other's body; but they found themselves to be the center of so many directions that they resembled a molested porcupine, and in their momentary confusion as to which direction was the right one—they not having blazed any part of their trail but the end—they lost their hold on the atmosphere and fell. When Adam fell he "lit down" on Eve for having tempted him; but these unfortunate men struck upon the rocks, and it was ascertained from the fragments of flesh and bone gathered up where they alighted that they were dead when found.

This somewhat fatal ending dismayed other persons,—but not for long. They reasoned that it was not the fault of the balloon: the men would have died if they had fallen three thousand feet out of a baby-carriage. There is no better use for common sense than to remove prejudice with it, and indeed in the century and a quarter that has passed since then fewer persons have died of balloons than from all other causes combined.

Most aërial voyages have been prompted by the universal desire of mortal to be alone with his conscience. A few have been made in the interest of science, and men have observed that high above the earth the scenery is monotonous and vegetation scarce, and that the cold increases with the distance. In truth, at the height of thirty-seven thousand feet—the greatest from which men have returned—one of the two aëronauts froze himself helpless, and the other would have done so if he had not pulled the valve-rope with his teeth after his hands were stiffened by the cold. His teeth, being made of bone, remained limber.

Digressively, the reference to the greatest height from which voyagers have returned brings sad wonderment as to what became of those who remained. They must have grown to feel very exclusive,—"stuck up," as it is sometimes expressed.

Considerable difficulty is experienced in breathing the very cold air of the upper currents; but presumably the difficulty of breathing very hot air is quite as great,—which may be what causes us to stay dead so long.

At great distances from the earth the microbes of disease are rare, as rare as the surrounding atmosphere, or as a properly-cooked beefsteak; the ones which aëronauts encounter oftenest being those of suspended animation, with the germs of the falling-sickness coming next.

It has been ascertained, too, that sounds are audible in the upper regions in proportion to the amount of moisture in the air. It is on record that one voyager heard at a height of two miles the barking of a little dog—which may, however, have been a Skye terrier. The direction from which the sound came is not specified.

Balloons have been used to some extent in warfare,—national warfare exclusively; they have not yet found a foothold in families. They have been employed to advantage in observing the movements of the enemy; but probably their chief use in this connection has been to enable the aëronaut to look over the side of his car and wonder what would happen to him if the enemy should spring upon him.

The balloon, however, is still a very unmanageable object, it being impracticable for its occupant to lie on his stomach and steer it with the toe of his boot. When this slight defect is remedied and a good deal is accomplished in the matter of its size it will afford means whereby an army may precipitate itself upon the enemy with great slaughter.

Little or no improvement has been made upon the original form of balloons, but at the present time common coal-gas is used for

the inflation. Filling them with a substance lighter than the air increases their rising power. Great fame awaits the man who shall inflate a balloon with something heavy and explore the bowels of the earth.

In passing through a heavy bank of clouds, or in crossing the Milky Way, the weight is sometimes so much increased by moisture deposited that the balloon is with difficulty prevented from violently smiting the earth and jarring off some of the inhabitants. Naturally this is a serious drawback; but the downward tendency could be offset by the aëronaut's quickly eating a quantity of anti-fat equal in weight to that of the accumulated moisture. But at present he carries with him ballast, to be cast out when occasion demands.

The throwing out of ballast is an operation which requires much tact and delicacy. If the aëronaut raises the object to the back corner of his neck to throw it he is likely to be mistaken for a woman and be greatly distressed for fear the missile will hit somebody.

Ballast should be discharged in small quantities. An experienced aëronaut hesitates before even letting his voice fall, or dropping his eyes,—or his h's, if he chances to be English.

One voyager observed that the throwing out of a small bone caused him to rise twenty or thirty yards. If persons falling from balloons could remember this and throw out one or two of their bones they might be able to remain in the air until rescued.

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